

Message Text

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61

ACTION EUR-12

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FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9246

INFO AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINS, UR, US, CSCE

SUBJECT: EMBASSY TRAVEL

REFS: MOSCOW 110, MOSCOW 689, MOSCOW 605, 75 STATE A-7356,

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY EXPERIENCED SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF TRAVEL REFUSALS BOTH TO OPEN AND CLOSED AREAS DURING JANUARY 1976. SOVIET REVIEW OF TRAVEL CONTROLS AND IMPLIED EASEMENT HAS YET TO MANIFEST ITSELF AT THE WORKING LEVEL. END SUMMARY.

2. CLOSED-AREA EXCEPTION REQUESTED FOR ANIKSHYAYSKIY RAYON, LITHUANIA WAS APPROVED FOR CONSULAR OFFICER TRAVELLING TO SMALL VILLAGE ON CONSULAR BUSINESS BUT DENIED FOR ACCOMPANYING POLITICAL OFFICER (FIRST SECRETARY PRESEL). TRIP LATER POSTPONED ONE WEEK DUE TO UNAVAILABILITY OF INYURKOLLEGIA (LAW OFFICE WHICH DEALS WITH FOREIGN CASES) OFFICIAL REQUIRED FOR TRANSLATION AND ESCORT DUTIES. CONSULAR OFFICER RESUBMITTED TRAVEL NOTE WITH WIFE AND FIRST SECRETARY BELOUSOVITCH AS ACCOMPANYING PERSONS. MFA PROTOCOL SECTION (VACHNEDZE) INFORMED EMBASSY JANUARY 28 THAT BELOUSOVITCH REFUSED SINCE EMBASSY NOTE TO MFA CONSULAR ADMINISTRATION HAD REQUESTED CLOSED-AREA ACCESS ON CONSULAR BUSINESS AND THEREFORE ONLY CONSULAR OFFICERS WOULD BE GRANTED EXCEPTION.

3. VACHNADZE INFORMED EMBASSY JANUARY 23 THAT PROPOSED TRAVEL OF FIRST SECRETARY SIMONS AND WIFE TO KOSTROMA COULD NOT BE

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REGISTERED "FOR REASONS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE."

4. MFA PROTOCOL SECTION (PROKOF'EV) MORNING JANUARY 27 APPROVED LATEST REQUEST BY EMBOFFS PRESEL AND LEMMON FOR TRAVEL TO VOLOGDA ONLY TO BE REVERSED IN AFTERNOON BY HIGHER UPS.

5. OPEN CITIES "CLOSED FOR REASONS OF A TEMPORARY NATURE" OR OTHERWISE DENIED IN JANUARY 1976 NUMBER 5: RIGA, TALLINN, YAKUTSK, KOSTROMA AND VOLOGDA. CLOSED-AREA EXCEPTIONS REFUSED NUMBER 4 OF 5 REQUESTED: GOR'KIY, KAUNAS AND ANIKSHYAYSK RAYON (2). SOLE CLOSED-AREA EXCEPTION GRANTED WAS FOR CONSULAR TRAVEL TO ANIKSHYAYSKIY RAYON WITHOUT ACCOMPANYING POLITICAL OFFICER. THE CONSULAR BUSINESS THERE IS IN RESPONSE TO A VA REQUEST THAT A CONSULAR OFFICER CHECK THE CONDITION OF A CLAIMANT FOR A VA INSURANCE POLICY (\$10,000) AND PRIVATE ESTATE (\$45,000). SINCE THE SOVIET AUTHORITIES KNOWN THAT THE VA DECISION ON THE INSURANCE CLAIM (AND, THEY MAY BELIEVE, ON THE ESTATE CLAIM AS WELL) CANNOT BE MADE UNTIL THE CONSULAR OFFICER FILES A REPORT OF HIS VISIT, IT IS PROBABLY THAT THE POTENTIAL HARD-CURRENCY GAIN TO THE USSR PROVIDES THE MOTIVE FOR PERMITTING THIS TRAVEL EXCEPTION.

EMBASSY TRAVEL STATISTICS FOR JANUARY 1976 ARE:

REQUESTS	DESTINATIONS	TRAVELLERS	SELF-CANCELLED	REFUSED OR ALTERED
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29	41	57	4	5
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EXCEPTION REQUESTED:

24-HOUR	48-HOUR	CLOSED AREA
1	2	5

EXCEPTIONS DENIED:

24-HOUR	48-HOUR	CLOSED-AREA
--	1	4

7. COMMENT: CONTINUED SOVIET DISAPPROVAL OF CLOSED-AREA ACCESS BY EMBOFFS OTHER THAN CONSULAR OFFICERS IMPOSES A WORKING HARDSHIP ON CONSULAR SECTION WHEN FORCED TO OPERATE WITH HALF ITS COMPLEMENT OF FOUR. FOR EXAMPLE, EMBASSY IS CURRENTLY PLANNING CONSULAR TRIP TO MIASS, CHELYABINSKAYA OBLAST, VIA CHELYABINSK, BY OFFICER WHO LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WILL NOT HAVE SPOUSE TO DRAW ON FOR REQUIRED ACCOMPANIMENT. ROUTINE MFA REFUSAL OF EMBASSY'S CLOSED-AREA REQUESTS IS RATHER DISCONCERTING IN VIEW OF SIGNIFICANT DISPARITY IN CLOSED-AREA ACCESS BETWEEN SOVIET EMBASSY WASHINGTON AND EMBASSY MOSCOW (REFS C AND D). WHILE EMBASSY WISHED TO REALIZE SUBSTANTIAL EASEMENT IN RECIPROCAL TRAVEL-CONTROL PROGRAM, PERHAPS SOME IMPETUS (AND INPUT) CAN BE PROVIDED TO SOVIET REVIEW PROCESS BY A SOMEWHAT STRICTER STANCE AS TO ACCOMPANYING PERSONS AND LEVEL OF

CLOSED-AREA ACCESS. WE WILL ALSO ATTEMPT TO INCREASE THE NUMBER
OF EMBASSY CLOSED-AREA REQUESTS TO OFFSET EXISTING IMBALANCE.
EMBASSY, OF COURSE, DEFERS TO DEPARTMENT'S JUDGMENT AS TO THE
PRACTICABILITY (AND DESIRABILITY) OF SUCH MEASURES BUT WOULD BE
INTERESTED IN DEPARTMENT'S THOUGHTS. EMBASSY TRAVEL-CONTROL
RECOMMENDATIONS WITHIN OVERALL CSCE APPROACH WILL BE FORWARDED BY
SEPTTEL. END COMMENT.
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